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E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2006

In Today's Papers

New Anti-Terror Draft Submitted to Parliament  
Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others: A draft bill to amend Turkey's anti-terror law has been submitted to the parliament. The ruling AK Party government has broadened the scope of terrorist offences in the bill which will prompt fierce debate as its provisions could contradict Turkey's EU-linked reforms. Journalists will face imprisonment, prosecutors will be authorized to ban publications, and human and drug trafficking, irregularities in state contracts, prostitution, pollution, and credit card forgery will be treated as terror offenses under the new law which also aims at curbing the financial resources of terrorism. Media outlets which "promote and propagate terrorism" will be suspended for up to one month at the request of a public prosecutor. Terrorist organizations' members will face 10 years imprisonment and supporters three years. The same sentences will be applied to those who carry "a sign or emblem, or wear a uniform of a terrorist organization." Dailies express concern that Turkish reforms in the last ten years to improve freedom of expression will suffer a setback. Cumhuriyet says the measures introduced by the draft would be worse than those applied under marshal law.

Warning the government about the negative impact of the newly introduced anti-terror law, columnist Fehmi Koru wrote in the Islamist-opinion maker Yeni Safak: "The government's "no step back from democracy" rhetoric conflicts with the anti-terror draft. Almost every aspect of the anti-terror draft envisions the narrowing down of democratic rights and freedoms. The new initiative has not only a potential for imposing limitations on citizen rights but also has potential to influence Turkey's future negatively. The new anti-terror law also conflicts with all the EU-harmonization laws introduced by the government during the last four years."

#### Turkey Names New Central Bank Governor

All papers: President Sezer approved the ruling AK Party nominee, Durmus Yilmaz, to be appointed to govern the Central Bank (CB,) ending a month of uncertainty that had threatened to undermine the country's economic gains. Yilmaz, 59, a UK-educated economist who has been with the Central Bank since 1980, pledged to continue the fight against inflation and to achieve "lasting price stability." Analysts said Yilmaz would bring steadiness to the bank and the conduct of monetary policy. Yilmaz succeeds Sureyya Serdengeçti, the widely admired governor whose term expired on March 14. Turkey's financial markets rose after the announcement.

#### Poll: Turks Don't Trust Political Leaders

Milliyet: A public opinion survey conducted by the ruling AK Party's Political Strategies Center, headed by AKP lawmaker Mahmut Kocak, showed 49.6 percent of respondents trusted none of the political leaders in Turkey. 79.6 percent said they were mostly influenced by "nationalism" among several other trends. The percentage of votes in case of general elections would be as AKP 28 percent, MHP 14, DYP 12, CHP 11, pro-Kurdish DTP 5.5, and ANAP 4.3. The survey was carried out with 16,704 people in 27 provinces between March 28 and April 9.

#### Turkey Condemns Tel Aviv Suicide Bombing

Sabah, Milliyet, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Yeni Safak and others: Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) condemned Monday's suicide attack in Tel Aviv that killed 10 and injured 50 others. A statement by MFA urged the sides to block efforts to

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boosting violence in the region. MFA Spokesman Namik Tan said at a weekly press briefing yesterday Hamas statements supporting terrorist attacks "are not helpful to the political process," adding "in line with the expectations of the international community, Hamas must take forward steps that would contribute to the process." Sabah says Israel had been uneasy with Ankara's reluctance to condemn statements of Hamas officials justifying the attack. In a phone conversation with FM Gul, the Israeli FM Livni urged Turkey to respond more strongly to Hamas statements supportive of terrorist actions. Livni will soon pay a state visit to Ankara for meetings on Hamas, Sabah says. Meanwhile, Radikal reports the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas will visit Ankara on April 24.

Commenting in mainstream Sabah, Mehmet Barlas noted that while most see the tensions in the world as negative, there are also those who benefit: "The oil giants are certainly the number one on this list because every new crisis in the Middle East leads to a dramatic rise in oil prices which means a significant rise in profits. The arms industry is undoubtedly another beneficiary of world tensions. Ongoing tensions with Iran also serve the interests of both the Iranian mullahs and American neo-cons. Iranian religious figures are enjoying the opportunity to enhance their standing with the people while American neo-cons are also happy to have the chance to gain attention once again particularly after the Iraq failure."

#### Secretary Rice Due to Visit Turkey

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Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Zaman and others report Secretary Rice is to visit Turkey on April 26 before she participates in the NATO foreign ministers meetings in Sofia. Rice will meet with President Sezer, Prime Minister Erdogan, and Foreign Minister Gul to discuss the PKK, nuclear strains with Iran, Palestine, and Cyprus.

#### TV Highlights

NTV, 8.00 a.m.

#### Domestic News

- Turkey's National Security Council (MGK) will meet on Thursday to discuss terrorism and Iran's nuclear activities.

- Three PKK militants and one security personnel have been killed in operations in the southeastern provinces of Hakkari and Siirt. 22 people, including four women, have been detained in anti-terror operations in central Turkish provinces of Sivas and Tokat for recruiting new members for the PKK. Four members of Turkey's main Kurdish party DTP have been detained in Tunceli for alleged ties with the PKK.

- Four people detained in connection with burying barrels of toxic waste in Tuzla near Istanbul have been set free after the prosecutor said there is still no law under which they could be charged.

- On April 22-23, State Minister for economy, Ali Babacan and accompanying economists will attend IMF and World Bank Spring meetings in Washington where they will also meet with US Treasury, and World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz. The delegation will move on to New York on April 24 to attend the UN Economic and Social Council meeting.

#### International News

- Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis has reiterated support for Turkey's EU entry bid, urging Turkey to meet its political responsibilities for membership.

- President Bush said "all options are on the table" in

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dealing with Iran's nuclear program, stressing diplomacy is still the best course.

- Secretary Rumsfeld said he won't quit despite calls by several retired American generals to step down.

- Yalcin Ozbey, Turkish fugitive implicated in the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II in 1981, has been rearrested in Brussels for crimes committed in Belgium. He will appear before court on Thursday. Turkey sent a file to the Belgian authorities for Ozbey's extradition.

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